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## Of Gardens and Gates in (International) Political Economy: A Rejoinder

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Volumes as insightful as *Critical International Political Economy: Dialogue, Debate and Dissensus* (edited by Stuart Shields, Ian Bruff and Huw Macartney) and *Cultural Political Economy* (edited by Jacqueline Best and Matthew Paterson) are likely to be read differently by different audiences. The editors' astute responses thus allow us to better appreciate their original objectives and address their shared concern: a too narrow reading of the volumes. Within the limited space of this rejoinder, I engage with this particular concern to clarify that there is no one right way to think about the global political economy or global political economies in the plural.

For each volume's editors, the concern has a distinct origin. Shields, Bruff and Macartney stress that critical IPE encompasses far more than neo-Gramscianism. Best and Paterson, for their part, claim that the contributors to their volume are 'gardening' while my review in this journal (42, no. 3) is an exercise in 'gatekeeping'. As Shields, Bruff and Macartney's volume powerfully reminds us, most of the time someone is sitting at the gate to regulate entry to the garden.

My admittedly provocative labelling of the two 'C' strands as in opposition to 'orthodox' IPE was not aimed at proscribing the continued use of an IPE 'parliament' or at regulating the entry to any 'garden'. Most gardens are demarcated by a fence or hedge, but to stretch the metaphor, we can choose to leave the gate closed or open. Also, paths or trails might connect some gardens but not others.

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In drafting this rejoinder, I benefited from suggestions from André Broome.

The review sought to explore such connections between the two volumes – and critical and cultural works on matters of political economy more generally – from an IPE perspective. This attempt to add clarity to the relationship between contemporary intellectual projects does not mean joining the gatekeepers. Nor does it amount to ‘distinguishing sharply between “critical” and “cultural” approaches’ (Shields, Bruff and Macartney, p. in reply?). On the contrary, the review identifies some potentially fruitful commonalities between the work of critical international political economists and that of cultural political economists.

The contributions to the two volumes raise many important points for those working on issues commonly – and perhaps too conveniently – subsumed under the disciplinary banner of ‘IPE’. These important points include but are not limited to: the cultural underpinnings and socio-economic effects of global capitalism; the room for individual and collective agency under conditions of structural constraint (culture and/or capitalism); the continual creation of and potential resistance against different forms of marginalisation; and the scope and kind of engagement with such issues from a diversity of intellectual standpoints.

If there is one area of agreement between the two volumes and my ‘IPE reading’ of them, it is that we should leave the gates to all intellectual gardens *wide* open for entry. A rejection of excessive disciplinary cultivation underpins this shared belief in open gates, which let in inspiration and contestation. A good reminder here is Andrew Abbott’s view that boundary-setting defines entities through processes of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>1</sup> In light of this insight, assessing new interventions against accepted perspectives should indeed avoid putting a straightjacket on commendable efforts to broaden our foundational horizons.

A genuinely pluralist stance reflects a willingness to see all disciplinary divisions as temporary constructions. Thus, although the choice of language is often indicative of substantive priorities, a dose of agnosticism about the designator for our subject will prove healthy, especially considering how contested the inclusion or omission of the ‘I’ continues to be. As long as we accept competing analytical approaches, the study of political economy may be labelled ‘international’, ‘global’, ‘critical’ or ‘cultural’, or carry no label at all (which is also a label). Its principal purpose remains to improve our understanding of political economies at different scales and in different contexts, regardless of scholars’ theoretical orientations and primary audiences.

There is no doubt that both ‘C’ strands achieve this feat from their chosen perspective. As the two volumes aptly illustrate, analysing contemporary political economies with an exclu-

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Abbott, ‘Things of Boundaries’, *Social Research* 62, no. 4 (1995): 857–82. Best and Paterson offer that exclusion cannot be avoided even by those ‘gardening’ (p. in reply?).

sively ‘orthodox’ (I)PE mindset would serve to undermine a pluralist spirit. While (international?) political economists of all shades need to grapple with foundational questions, many of their intellectual endeavours begin elsewhere – with empirical questions that make us jump over high fences and cut through thick hedges, even when some gates are closed, to obtain a clearer view of the political economies visible beyond these demarcations.